

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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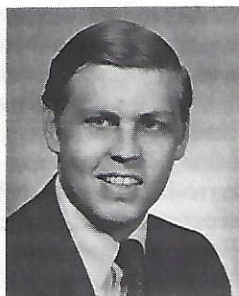
October, 1985

Kent Masterson Brown on Alonzo Cushing and His Battery at Gettysburg

In his epic poem of the Civil War, *John Brown's Body*, Stephen Vincent Benet wrote these lines:

"Cushing ran down the last of his guns to the battle-line. The rest had been smashed to scrap by Lee's artillery fire. He held his guts in his hand as the charge came up to the wall And his guns spoke out for him once before he fell to the ground."

The heroism displayed by this courageous Union artilleryman will be the focal point of Kent Masterson Brown's remarks to The Round Table at its 444th regular meeting on October 11th at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison. Mr. Brown, a partner in a Lexington, Kentucky law firm, is the creator of "Civil War Forum" for *Virginia Country* magazine and currently serves as Forum editor.



Alonzo Hereford Cushing was born on January 19, 1841 near Delafield, Wisconsin. When his father's health declined, the family moved to Chicago in 1844, but his father died that same year. Mrs. Cushing then moved the family to her late husband's boyhood home, Fredonia, New York. Here, Cushing grew up and helped to supplement his mother's income from teaching through work at a grocery store. Through the aid of his uncle, a New York state representative, he received an appointment to West Point, served four of the five assigned years and graduated 12th in the June, 1861 class of 34. When he graduated, Cushing had been selected Captain of the Corps of Cadets, and was commissioned both a second and first lieutenant on the same day. He was assigned to the 4th U.S. Artillery and ordered to the defenses of Washington. However, this unit was on its way to Washington from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Cushing was temporarily assigned to Greene's Battery G of the 2nd U.S. Artillery. He served with this battery at 1st Bull Run, and saw action at Blackburn's Ford. After the battle, he became ill with typhoid fever and remained on sick leave at his brother Milton's Washington home through November, 1861. His work had been noticed and on January 21, 1862, he was appointed ordnance officer at the headquarters of Maj. Gen. Edwin V. Sumner. With the formation of the 2nd Army Corps of the Army of the Potomac on March 12, 1862, Cushing was named an aide-de-camp in charge of topographical work at Sumner's headquarters. Here he served through the siege of



444th Regular Meeting

Kent Brown

on

Alonzo Cushing and His Battery at Gettysburg

Friday, October 11, 1985

Quality Inn

Halsted and Madison

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$13.00 per person

Entree: Chicken Kiev, Fish or Fruit Plate



Yorktown and the Seven Days battles before Richmond.

He distinguished himself at Antietam and again at Fredericksburg, where he served as a topographical engineer at the headquarters of Sumner's Right Grand Division and reviewed the troops with Gen. Darius N. Couch during the peak of the bloody assaults upon Marye's Heights. For his services Cushing was awarded the brevet rank of Captain and would henceforth be known as "Captain Cushing." His last service as an aide-de-camp came in January, 1863 when Gen. Burnside requested him to guide the 2nd Corps on the infamous 'Mud March.' When this venture ended in dismal failure, Cushing, depressed and sullen, secured a leave of absence, visiting the now resigned Gen. Sumner in Syracuse and his mother in Fredonia. He returned to the battle lines in Virginia in February, 1863, and at last had his own field command, Battery A of the 4th U.S. Artillery. When Chancellorsville ended in a Federal defeat, Cushing was disheartened. His unit had spent most of the battle guarding United States Ford on the Rapidan. However, he would again be brevetted for gallantry.

In early June, Cushing and his battery were encamped

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
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The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Dan Weinberg, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.



(continued from page 1)

at Falmouth, Virginia where time was spent reequipping the unit. By the 15th Cushing and Battery A moved in the vanguard of the 2nd Corps as it moved through northern Virginia, and by 11 o'clock they had reached Taneytown, Maryland. That evening, the battery advanced toward Gettysburg and encamped behind the Round Tops South of town. On July 3rd, in the attack pressed by Pickett's division and other supporting Confederate brigades, Cushing lost his life defending, with his battery, that portion of the Union defense line that has come to be known as the 'Bloody Angle' near the little clump of trees that was a focal point of the rebel attack.

A graduate of Centre College, Kentucky, Mr. Brown secured his law degree from Washington & Lee University. In addition to his editorship of "Civil War Forum," he has also edited volumes I and II of *Virginia Country's Civil War*, each volume a collection of articles that first appeared in that magazine. He has also contributed the following articles to the "Forum": "The Trains of Misery: Lee's Retreat from Gettysburg"; "Lee at Gettysburg, Parts I and II"; "The Agonies of the Brothers Patton: The Story of Col. George S. Patton and Col. Waller T. Patton"; and "Pickett's Charge and Numerous Countercharges".

Mr. Brown also serves as a contributing editor to the *Lincoln Herald* and articles published in that historical quarterly include: "By Hand to the Front: Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing and his Battery at Gettysburg"; "Greenhorns and Honey Bees: the 132nd Regiment, Pennsylvania Infantry at Antietam", and a two-part series on the life of A. P. Hill: "A. P. Hill: A Narrative" and "Tell Hill to Prepare for Action: Mechanicsburg to Sharpsburg".

He is currently editing a book under contract with the University of North Carolina Press entitled *The Trains of Misery: Lee's Retreat from Gettysburg*. He has also written introductions and narrative histories to the following reprints: C. H. Banes, *History of the Philadelphia Brigade*; Robson, *How a One-Legged Rebel Lives*; Milham, *The Gallant Pelham*; Bond, *Pickett or Pettigrew*. He has delivered addresses to seven Round Tables, and some of our members heard his lecture at the Midwest Civil War Conference held in May, 1984 at Indianapolis. He is also the originator and moderator for *Virginia Country's Civil War Seminars*, which dealt with Early's Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864 in October, 1984 and Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862 in May, 1985.

The First Annual West Coast Civil War Conference will be held in Long Beach, California November 22-23, 1985. Among the speakers will be Jerry Russell on "The Civil War West of Texas;" William C. "Jack" Davis on "The Orphan Brigade;" and Dr. Grady McWhiney and Dr. Mark Neely on "Davis and Lincoln." The conference is being sponsored by Civil War Round Table Associates in cooperation with the Lincoln Shrine, the CWRT of Long Beach, the CWRT of Los Angeles, the Peninsula CWRT, the CWRT of San Francisco, and the CWRT of San Gabriel Valley.

The registration fee, which includes all sessions and meals, but not lodging, is \$100 for CWRT Associates members and \$125 for non-members (\$10 discount if paid by November 1). For further information, contact Conference, Box 7388W, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217.

September meeting

On Friday, September 20, The Civil War Round Table held its 12th annual Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner. As it has been in the past, it was a special evening. Ninety-eight members and guests gathered to honor the deserving recipient of the Award, noted historian and editor of the multi-volume series, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Dr. John Y. Simon. In return, they had the pleasure of hearing him speak about "Editing the Papers of U.S. Grant."

Dr. Simon was appointed executive director of the U.S. Grant Association in 1962 and began to compile Grant's papers. Initially, he thought the project would be no more than 15 volumes because most historians thought Grant was not a prolific writer. This assumption proved false; volumes 13 and 14, published in July, 1985, only take Grant's writings through the conclusion of the Civil War. The project now has a projected total of 25 volumes.

Dr. Simon gave three reasons why he began his work collecting Grant's papers. One, Grant played an important role in American history, both as a wartime general and as President. Secondly, Grant is an interesting individual. His personal goals (to become a mathematics professor or a farmer) never came true, instead, he became a successful soldier and reluctant president. Third, Grant wrote well. He wrote all his campaign reports himself and let his staff fill in only the dates and statistics. His *Memoirs* is considered one of the best autobiographies in the English language.

The reason that Grant was both a good and prolific writer, John said, is that his background prepared him for it. When he attended West Point, he received the best education available at that time. After graduation, he was assigned to the Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis and began to keep a journal. Unfortunately, when Grant and his regiment were transferred to Louisiana, it was lost. Grant's military duties during and after the Mexican War introduced him to army paperwork. He served as adjutant, quartermaster, and commissary officer. All these positions involved extensive correspondence, which had to be done correctly, including folding the returns in the proper manner.

Historians have viewed Grant's army and civilian years before the Civil War as ones of failure. He resigned his commission because of alleged alcoholism and failed at several civilian occupations. In reality, Grant was ahead of most of his West Point classmates. In 1853, when he was promoted to the permanent rank of captain, only four out of 39 of his class were at that rank. Eighteen class members still on active duty were all first lieutenants. When the Civil War began, not one officer from Grant's class was a major. Dr. Simon also pointed out that many Americans suffered economic loss and career frustration during the late 1850s. This included Sherman who failed as a lawyer and businessman. Grant remained emotionally untouched by either economic adversity or military and political success.

Grant's Civil War correspondence has a special quality. His orders and directives are direct, concise, unemotional and easily understood. He was a master of words and expressed his thoughts as they came to mind. Although he would delete and substitute an occasional word or phrase, he seldom redrafted his correspondence. Grant wrote up to 35 orders a day. It was a normal procedure for him to write while discussing other topics with his staff.

Grant would emphasize one subject only in a letter and reduce complex issues to simple solutions. Dr. Simon cited several examples of Grant's direct and concise Civil War

correspondence. One was his reply to a long letter from Confederate General Buckner. In a short letter, Grant told Buckner that he had received Buckner's letter, that Grant would accept only "unconditional surrender," and that Grant would move immediately upon Buckner's force if he didn't surrender. Buckner responded by surrendering his army.

Grant's style of writing did not use the flowery language associated with the 19th century. One scholar who studied the correspondence of Confederate officers found that they were prone to use words such as "kind," "noble," "gentleman," "brave," and "gallant." Grant's correspondence does not use these words. Instead, his writing shows a general who has a mastery of the details required to command an army. He had the power of extreme mental concentration and the ability to reduce complex issues to basic fundamentals. Then he issued orders which were concise and understandable. As John noted in conclusion, Grant was a man in control of himself and this helped him to control other men.

Westport, Mine Creek tours

This year, for the first time, the Battle of Westport and the Battle of Mine Creek tours will be held on the same weekend, October 26-27. Two types of tours for the Battle of Westport will be offered: an in-depth all-day tour of the three-day battle on Saturday, and three-hour tours on both Saturday and Sunday. The all-day tour will follow along the original route of the historic Independence/Westport Roads and include some 26 sites. The three-hour tour will follow a 30 mile route through greater Kansas City where key events occurred during the 1864 battle, often referred to as the "Gettysburg of the West." The cost of the three-hour tour is \$11; the all-day tour costs \$22, which includes lunch. For reservations and further information, contact the Westport Historical Society, P.O. Box 10076, Westport Station, Kansas City, Missouri 64111 (816) 561-1821.

The Battle of Mine Creek, which occurred two days after the Battle of Westport, was the only Civil War battle fought in Kansas. The Battlefield Park is located near Pleasanton, Kansas and has been partially developed by the Kansas State Historical Society with advisory assistance from the Kansas City Round Table. The tour will virtually recreate the action in which Confederate troops under General Sterling Price were defeated by Union troops under General Alfred Pleasanton. The cost of this tour is also \$22, including lunch. For further information and reservations, contact the Kansas City Civil War Round Table, 707½ South Douglas, Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063 (913) 432-5941 or (816) 561-1821.

Lumir Buresh, a member of the Kansas City Round Table as well as our own, says that if there is sufficient interest from out of town participants, a dinner and program could be arranged for Saturday, October 26. Lumir can be contacted at 4817 West 69th St., Prairie Village, Kansas 66208 (913) 432-5941.

Round Table members are invited to participate in an informal visit to Oakwoods Cemetery on Chicago's south side on Sunday, October 27. Oakwoods is the final resting place of thousands of Confederate soldiers. At about 11 a.m., fellow member Bill Sullivan will read the address originally delivered when the monument to the Confederate soldiers was dedicated. For information, contact Leslie MacDonald at 878-1599. She plans to have further details available at the October meeting.

The New Books

compiled by Dick Clark



Houzeau, Jean-Charles. *My Passage at the New Orleans Tribune: A Memoir of the Civil War Era*. Edited with an introduction by David C. Rankin. Translated by Gerard F. Denault. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984. 168 p., bibliog., index. \$20.00.

McKaig, Priscilla Ellen Beall. *The McKaig Journal: A Confederate Family of Cumberland*. Edited and annotated by Helene L. Baldwin, Michael Allen Mudge, Keith W. Schlegel. Cumberland, MD: Allegany County Historical Society, 1984.

Milham, Charles G. *Gallant Pehlam: American Extraordinary*. Introduction by Major General U.S. Grant 3rd. Introduction by Kent Masterson Brown. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1985. 250 p., maps, illus., index. \$25.00. Original of 1959.

Miller, Rex. *The Forgotten Regiment, a Day-by-Day Account of the 55th Alabama Infantry Regiment, CSA (1861-1865)*. Williamsville, NY: Patrex Press, 1984. 303 p., illus.

Morris, George S. and Susan L. Foutz. *Lynchburg in the Civil War: The City—the People—the Battle*. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, 1985. \$16.95.

North American Fighting Uniforms: An Illustrated History since 1756. Poole, Dorset, England: Blandford Press, 1984. qto, 128 p., col. illus. \$14.95.

Reston, James Jr. *Sherman's March and Vietnam*. New York: Macmillan, 1894. xii, 323 p., index. \$14.95.

Rhoades, Jeffrey. *Scapegoat General: The Story of Major General Benjamin Huger, C.S.A.* Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1985. 140 p., illus., bibliog. \$17.50.

Robertson, James I., Jr., and the editors of Time-Life Books. *Tenting Tonight: The Soldier's Life*. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1984. qto. 176 p., illus. some col.

Schenck, Martin. *Up Came Hill: The Story of the Light Division and its Leaders*. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1985. vi, 344 p., maps, port., index. \$25.00. Original of 1958.

Scott, John. *Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby*. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1985. 492 p., maps, illus. \$30.00. Original of 1867.

Spencer, John W. *From Corsicana to Appomattox; The Story of the Corsicana Invincibles and the Navarro Rifles*. Corsicana, TX: Texas Press, 1984. viii, 199 p., illus. bibliog., index. \$12.95.

Stockwell, Elisha. *Private Elisha Stockwell, Jr. Sees the Civil War*. Edited by Byron R. Abernethy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. 210 p., plates. pbk \$6.95. Original of 1958.

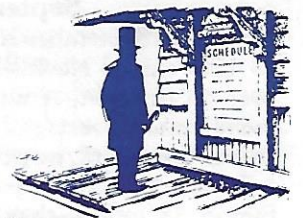
Straubing, Harold E. *Civil War Eyewitness Reports*. Compiled by...Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1985. \$25.00.

Sunderland, Glenn W. *Wilder's Lightning Brigade and its Spencer Repeaters*. Washington, IL: The Book Works, 1985? pbk. \$8.95. Previously published as *Lightning at Hoover's Gap* by Yoseloff, 1969.

Trask, Benjamin H. *95th Virginia Infantry*. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, 1984. \$16.95.

Wilkinson, John. *The Narrative of a Blockade-runner*. Alexandria, VA: 1984. 252 p., \$19.95. Original of 1877.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

October 11: Kent Brown on "Alonzo Cushing and His Battery at Gettysburg."

November 8: Donald C. Pfanz on "Negligence on the Right: The 11th Corps at Chancellorsville."

December 13: Christopher Calkins, subject to be announced.

January 10, 1986: "Our Ethnic Ancestors in the Civil War;" a panel featuring Wayne Anderson, Marshall Krollick, Bill Sullivan, Karl Sundstrom, and Jim Vlazny.

February 14: Mark E. Neeley, Jr., on "Lincoln and Douglas: A Relationship to Consider."

March 15: All day assembly on "Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant: The Civil War Years."

April 11: Edgar Archer on "Orthopedic Surgery in the Civil War."

May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour: The 1862 Peninsula Campaign.

May 9: Gordon Whitney on "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address."

June 13: James I. "Bud" Robertson on "Confederate General A. P. Hill."

New members

David Bailey, 1569 Marquette Avenue, Naperville, Illinois 60565. (312) 983-1585.

Kay Hilton, 3100 N. Lake Shore, Chicago, Illinois 60657. (312) 248-9013.

LaDonna Loitz, 920 W. George, Chicago, Illinois 60657. (312) 472-7993.

Dr. S. Scott Slabaugh, 10S261 Argonne Ridge Road, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521. (312) 789-0328.

Changes of address

Arthur Armstrong, 3524 Highway Ave., Highland, Indiana 46322.

C. Robert Douglas, 3100 N. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, Illinois 60657.

Beauvoir, the historic last home of Jefferson Davis in Biloxi, Mississippi, sustained considerable damage from Hurricane Elena on Labor Day and losses are estimated at about \$250,000. Beauvoir recently began a major renovation and restoration project. Now, however, funds being raised for that purpose will be used to repair the damage. Contributions can be sent to Beauvoir, Jefferson Davis Shrine, Box 200, W. Beach Blvd., Biloxi, Mississippi 39531. Contributors of \$150 will receive the first two plates of the "Great Historical Southern Series," entitled "Jefferson Davis and Varina Howell Davis."

The Fifth Great American Civil War Book, Paper, and Image Fair will be held October 19 in Fairfax, Virginia. For information, contact C.L. Batson, 5512 Buggy Whip Dr., Centreville, Virginia 22020.